Discrimination against Hindus in Bangladesh

1909. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that as per US reports, Hindus are not safe in Bangladesh, *i.e.* there are reports of societal abuses and discrimination based on religious belief or practices;

(b) whether it is a fact that Bangladesh Government is seizing lands from Hindus affecting all-most all the 10 million strong Hindu community in that country; and

(c) if so, the action plan of Government to protect the interests of left-out Hindus in that country?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Reports of violence and atrocities against minorities including Hindus in Bangladesh are received from time to time. The primary responsibility for the protection of the life, liberty and property of all citizens of Bangladesh, including minorities, rests with the Government of Bangladesh. It has been conveyed at the highest levels of Government that such incidents have an adverse impact on public sentiment in India, which in turn have the potential of affecting bilateral ties, and should be strictly dealt with. The Government of India continue to monitor the situation closely and are in touch with the Government of Bangladesh in this regard.

Exodus of scientists

1910. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ISRO lost 392 scientists in the last 36 months;

(b) if so, the details in this regard and reasons for this exodus amongst the scientists;

(c) after putting up how many years of service these scientists left the organization; and

(d) the steps taken to arrest this trend of brain drain?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Stupendous growth of Information Technology and Communication sector in the country and the higher remunerative packages being offered by the private sectors are the main reasons for the scientists to leave ISRO. Out of 392,97 scientists have left ISRO after putting 20 + years of service whereas others have put in less than 20 years of service.

(d) The Department of Space has submitted a proposal to the Sixth Pay Commission for the enhanced Pay and Special Incentives such as performance based annual increments, special allowances, functional allowances etc., for ISRO Scientists/Engineers.

Safeguarding of space assets

†1911. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether keeping in view the apprehension that outer space may be the future battle-field, a need to establish a powerful international network to safeguard space assets was felt in the recently held International Astronomical Congress at Hyderabad in September, 2007;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the concrete steps taken by India in this regard; and

(c) the proposed space programmes for next five years and the names of the areas of space-science they are related to including advance communication system, navigation, space-transport, and earth-monitoring?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The International Astronautical Congress 2007 addressed the need for evolving a co-operative strategy of international community in space exploration including means for protection of space assets. India is a member of the International Committee on Peaceful uses of Outer Space which discusses such issues to evolve strategies related to protection of space assets. India has also taken up studies on the subject.

(c) The Space programme envisaged for the next five years includes development of advanced launch vehicle systems such as GSLV Mk III, Space Capsule Recovery Experiment and technologies for Manned Mission; Augmenting the INSAT/GSAT system towards meeting the satellite communications requirements; establishing Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System; enhanced imaging capabilities with Microwave and Optical remote sensing satellites; undertake front ranking research in the areas of Space Science, Astronomy and Planetary exploration including Chandrayaan.

Water mafia in Delhi

†1912. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:

Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of water in litres being stolen by water mafia in Delhi;

(b) whether Government is also aware of the fact that on the bank of Nizamuddin bridge on Yamuna, on the land of Delhi State Mineral Corporation illegal water is being stolen by water mafia on more than twenty places by boring; and

(c) if so, the action that is being taken by Government against those indulging in illegal exploitation of water in Delhi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI AJAY MAKEN): (a) and (b) Delhi Police has informed that no such instance has come to their notice. Delhi Jal Board has reported that due to unplanned growth in various parts of the city it is not easy to quantify the quantum of water which may be lost on account of theft.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Protection of walled cities

1913. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI:

SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:

Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken to protect, preserve and restore the walled old cities of India that are great cultural and architectural heritage of the country;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.